



**STATE OF ARKANSAS
ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR**

**Arkansas Child Welfare Oversight Panel Meeting
October 6, 2015**

Agenda

- 2 pm Welcome – Betty Guhman, Courtney Massey**
- 2:05 Overview of Vincent Report**
Challenges
Strength
Governor Acceptance of Recommendations
- 2:10 Overall Implementation Plan**
Governor's Office
Oversight Panel
Legislative support
- 2:15 DCFS – Current Statistics**
- 2:25 Focus/Working Groups (*and proposed measures/outcomes*)**
1. Child Safety
2. Child Permanency
3. Administrative Flexibility/Worker Support
4. Stakeholder Partnerships/ Practice Models
5. Resource Availability, In-home services
- 2:30 Oversight Panel Introductions (and initial interest areas)**
Legislative
Judicial
Stakeholders
Ex-Officio
- 2:55 Wrapup, Next meeting date**

Arkansas Child Welfare Oversight Panel

Expanded Agenda with Talking Points Tuesday October 6, 2015

Welcome – Betty Guhman, Courtney Massey

Overview of Vincent Report

Challenges/Areas of concern:

- Growing Foster Care population
- High child fatality rates
- Severely limited placement resources
- Placements outside child's home county
- Placement disruptions
 - Unrealistic Worker caseloads
- Frustrated and discouraged work force
- Meaningful Stakeholder engagement
- Limited in-home/community based services for children and families
- Inadequate Foster home recruitment, retention and support services
- Untimely and incomplete investigations and family assessments
- Centralized decision making and administrative obstacles

Strengths/Improvements:

- Thoroughness of investigations has improved, 58% in 2011 to 70% in 2015.
- Improved percentage of face-to-face contact with in-home families (75% 2011 to 83% 2013)
- Generally exceeds national standards re: length of time children spend in foster care, Reunification within 12 months and rates of re-entry to care.
- Decreased average time to adoption from 25.4 months in 2011 to 22.1 in 2014.
- Expanded policies on policy on post-adoptive services in 2015.
- Secured federal waiver to permit more flexible use of federal foster care funds
- Received federal foster and adoptive recruitment and retention grant
- New casework assessment tools implemented.
- New worker training structure designed; provided new training to staff.
- Implemented new statutes permitting guardianships and fictive kin to become caregivers.
- Initiated New Quality Assurance and quality improvement efforts.
- Implemented Permanency Roundtable, approach to moving children/youth to permanency.
- Increased Percentage of children receiving supportive or protective services (in-home) who are abused or neglected within one year (at 9%, down from 15%)
- Implemented "Differential Response," a flexible assessment process for low-risk child protection cases.

Governor Acceptance of Recommendations

- Report focuses on what we need to work on – not how to make needed changes
- Importance of multidisciplinary and multi-agency planning and solutions
- End results – shared vision and shared strategies, strong partnerships, shared responsibility
- Child Welfare Section – Governor's Website

Overall Implementation Plan

#1 Governor's Office Leadership

- Roles: Develop Implementation Plan
 - Establish reform goals, milestones and outcomes
 - Ensure stakeholder involvement, transparency and accountability
 - Oversee website for information sharing and progress reports
 - Manage Oversight Panel
 - Coordinate Casey Family Foundation support

#2 Oversight Panel

- Roles: Review and support implementation plan, outcomes, and milestones
- Actively participate in one or more focus groups
- Ensure meaningful involvement of stakeholders in all planning and development activities
- Meet monthly to review strategies, progress, and challenges

#10-11 Legislative Support, Funding for Caseload reduction and Policy Impact – (Hester, Meeks, Irvin, Douglas)

- Interim Study Proposal- analysis of Fiscal/Policy Impact of Report Recommendations
- Committee Hearings
- Preparation for Fiscal session in 2016 and regular session in 2017

Focus/Working Groups (to address remaining recommendations)

Roles for each group:

- Members agree to serve on 1 or more *working groups (handout for selection)*
- Select co-chairs – one from DCFS one from Oversight Panel
- Determine appropriate outcomes/measures related to focus area (see notes below)
(Add additional outcomes as determined by group)
- Ensure appropriate stakeholder representation in all planning/development
- Meet monthly in working group to address assigned issue areas
- Encourage partnerships, shared vision and shared strategies

Group 1: Child Safety (recommendation # 8, proposed measures)

- Decrease child fatalities*
- Improve fatality review process*
- Decrease hotline delays and incomplete reports*
- Improve timely completion of maltreatment investigations*
- Increase monthly in-home visits*
- Improve protection plans to ensure child safety*
- Decrease incidence of recurrence of child maltreatment*
- Increase quality of family assessments and protection planning*
- Increase post adoptive services*

Group 2: Permanency /Placements (recommendation # 3)

- Number of youth placed in home county*
- Increase number of foster family homes*
- Increase number of children in foster family settings*
- Improve foster home recruitment, approval and retention*
- Increase timely response to foster home inquiries and applications*
- Increase respite home availability*
- Increase number of children placed with relatives*
- Increase # of reunifications within 12 months*
- Reduce number of placement disruptions*
- Increase child visits with parents and siblings*

Group 3: Administrative Flexibility/Worker Support (recommendation # 4, 6)

- Increase local/county autonomy, decision making*
- Improve worker morale*
- Reduce worker and staff attorney caseloads*
- Streamline compliance monitoring and multiple layers of review*

Group 4: Partnerships/Practice Models (recommendation #5, 7, 8)

Improve constructive working relationship with judiciary

Fully engage stakeholders in all aspects of strategy development and project planning

Develop shared vision and shared strategies among DHS and stakeholders

Increase family engagement in planning and decision making

Improve assessment of family needs

Expand practice model to focus on family and kin resources

Group 5: Resource Availability In-Home and Community based services (rec #9)

Increase mental health availability to children and families in own Home /community

Increase access to substance abuse treatment services

Expedite Medicaid eligibility for foster children and when child returns home

Increase wrap around services for children and families

Increase trauma responsive and mobile crisis services

DCFS Report – Current Arkansas Statistics

Oversight Panel Member Introductions (name, position, special interest areas)

Legislative Branch

Rep. David Meeks, Rep. Charlotte Douglas, Sen Bart Hester, Sen Missy Irvin

Judicial Branch

Ark Supreme Court Commission on Children, Youth and Families - Justice Rhonda Wood

Administrative Office of Courts - Connie Hickman Tanner

Juvenile Judges: Judge Wiley Branton, Judge Cindy Theyer, Judge Mike Medlock,

Judge Carlton Jones

Public Defender Commission – Tabitha McNulty

Executive Branch

Arkansas State Police CACD - Ron Stayton

Stakeholders/Advocates

Child Advocacy Centers – Stacey Thompson

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Youth – Jennifer Ferguson

Faith based organization reps - The CALL Lauri Currier, Charles Flynn, Arkansas

Baptist Family Homes

Foster/Adoptive Children and Parents: Melissa/Steven Choate, Christy Irvin, Nicole Potts,

Sandy/Dean Burbank, Ann Meythaler

Youth Advisory Board representative – Nautica Finley, Gretchen Skinner

Biological Parent – Wendy Founds

Arkansas Mental Health Council- Lori Poston (works for Mid-South)

Citizen Advocate – Jane Shippman

Citizen Advocate – Pat Page

Ex-Officio members

Casey Family foundation – Page Walley, Paul Vincent, Ann Stanley

DHS – John Selig, Keesa Smith, Cecile Blucker

Wrap up,

Next meeting- Hold Thursday November 19, 1-2:30 pm

Will provide Working Group and Legislator updates to members prior to Panel meetings

**Arkansas Child Welfare:
Improving Outcomes for Arkansas Children and Families**

Oversight Panel Member Name: _____

Working Group Preferences: #1_____ #2_____ #3_____ #4_____ #5_____

Note: additional/different outcomes may be identified by group members

Group 1: Child Safety (rec # 8)

*Decrease child fatalities
Improve fatality review process
Decrease hotline delays and incomplete reports
Improve timely completion of maltreatment investigations
Increase monthly in-home visits
Improve protection plans to ensure child safety
Decrease incidence of recurrence of child maltreatment
Increase quality of family assessments and protection planning
Increase post adoptive services*

Group 2: Permanency /Placements (rec# 3)

*Number of youth placed in home county
Increase number of foster family homes
Increase number of children in foster family settings
Improve foster home recruitment, approval and retention
Increase timely response to foster home inquiries and applications
Increase respite home availability
Increase number of children placed with relatives
Increase # of reunifications within 12 months
Reduce number of placement disruptions
Increase child visits with parents and siblings*

Group 3: Administrative Flexibility/Worker Support (rec # 4, 6)

*Increase local/county autonomy, decision making
Improve worker morale
Reduce worker and staff attorney caseloads
Streamline compliance monitoring and multiple layers of review*

Group 4: Partnerships/Practice Models (rec #5, 7, 8)

*Improve constructive working relationship with judiciary
Fully engage stakeholders in all aspects of strategy development and project planning
Develop shared vision and shared strategies among DHS and stakeholders
Increase family engagement in planning and decision making
Improve assessment of family needs
Expand practice model to focus on family and kin resources*

Group 5: Resource Availability In-Home and Community based services (rec #9)

*Increase mental health availability to children and families in own Home /community
Increase access to substance abuse treatment services
Expedite Medicaid eligibility for foster children and when child returns home
Increase wrap around services for children and families
Increase trauma responsive and mobile crisis services*